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SUBJECT: USAU: GUINEA'S AU MEMBERSHIP SUSPENDED

REF: ADDIS ABABA 3451

¶1. (U) As expected, the African Union's (AU) Peace and Security Council voted on December 29 to suspend Guinea from the organization until the country returns to constitutional order. The Council also reiterated its "firm condemnation" of the December 23 coup, which it regards as "a flagrant violation of the Constitution of Guinea and of the relevant AU instruments."

¶2. (SBU) The 15-member Peace and Security Council voted unanimously in favor of suspending the participation of Guinea in the activities of the AU. In their closed door deliberations, Council members reportedly maintained that this was an appropriate response in light of the military junta's actions in recent days, including its dissolution of the government and its call for presidential elections by ¶2010. "There is no way people can compromise on that," AU spokesman El-Ghassim Wane told USAU Charge after the meeting. "Many members of the Council expressed shock" that Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade had called for international recognition of Guinea's military junta, Wane said. A military takeover such as this "is against the rules."

¶3. (U) According to a communique released by the AU after the meeting, the Council also welcomed the coordination between the AU and ECOWAS, and urged AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping to pursue his efforts, including his contacts with coup leaders, "for the rapid return to constitutional order." Ping attended the late President Lansana Conte's funeral in Conakry on December 26.

¶4. (U) On December 24, Council members stopped short of voting to suspend Guinea's membership because they still considered the events as merely a coup attempt and did not want to give coup leaders more legitimacy. Their communique from December 24 urged all parties in Guinea, "particularly the heads of the armed forces at all levels, to do everything to avoid acts of violence and coercion." The Council further warned that the "perpetrators of the coup attempt and all those involved in the subversion of the Guinean Constitution and efforts aimed at undermining legality, including violations of human rights and the dignity of Guineans, shall be held fully and personally accountable for their actions and dealt with accordingly."

¶5. (U) Council members punctuated their December 24 communique by rejecting "the phenomenon of coup d'etat, which constitutes a threat to peace and security on the continent, as well as a serious setback in the ongoing democratization process in Africa."

YAMAMOTO